8 Irelandvol 7. 19

CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

EXPEDIENCY AND ADVANTAGE

OF FREQUENT

NEW PARLIAMENTS

IN *IRELAND.*

Humbly addreſſed to the LEGISLATURE of this Kingdom.

BY A

Member of the Houſe of Commons.

Salus populi, ſuprema Lex.

DUBLIN: Printed in the Year 1766.

CONSIDERATIONS, &c.

TO propagate falſe Principles concerning Government is no leſs injurious to the *King*, than to the People.

SOME Attempts however have been lately made, to perſuade the People of *Ireland* (tho' Subjects of the ſame *Prince* with thoſe of *Great Britain*,) that they have no Right to demand frequent *new Parliaments*.

I SHALL endeavour to ſhew, Firſt, that *the People* of this Kingdom have *a Right* to frequent *new Parliaments*, not only from our *ancient Conſtitution*; the Rights of which were not only explained by the new *Magna Charta*, obtained at the Revolution; but by poſitive and expreſs Statutes, ſtill in force.

SECONDLY, I ſhall take the Liberty to examine ſome of the principal Arguments made uſe of by the *Advocates for long* Parliaments, and ſhew that they are for the moſt Part grounded on mere Surmiſes, imaginary Dangers, and Inconveniences, ſo trifling in themſelves, as to deſerve very little Attention.

I SHALL ſpeak on this Subject with that Freedom which a Man may take, who is conſcious that he means nothing but the Public Good, who hath no By-ends in view, nor is under the Influence of ſerving any particular Cauſe.

GIVE me leave to mention, what appears to me, to have been the *ancient Conſtitution* of *Parliaments*.

AFTER the *Union* of the *Heptarchy*, King *Alfred* (*a*), that *Great Founder* of the *Britiſh Conſtitution*,

(*a*) See the *Mirrour*, Chap. 1. Sect. 3.

ſtitution, ordained, that Parliaments ſhould meet every Year *twice*, or oftener if need were.

William the *Conqueror* confirmed all the ancient Cuſtoms and Liberties of the People, and at his Coronation bound himſelf by an Oath, to govern *them* by the Laws of the Realm.

That Parliaments were held regularly every Year, at leaſt *once*, for the Redreſs of Grievances, ordering the Affairs of the Kingdom, making new Laws, and amending old ones for the Good of the People, (which were the main Ends of calling Parliaments) *Glanvil*, who wrote in the Reign of King *Henry* II. expreſsly mentions,

In the Reign of *Henry* II, a *Modus tenendi Parliamenta*, in *Terminis*, the ſame with that of *Great-Britain*, was ſent by that Prince into this Kingdom, and the like Laws and Liberties granted *them*, with the People of *England*; ſo that from his Reign, I think we may look upon it as an eſtabliſhed Truth, that the *Conſtitution* of this *Kingdom*, in Reſpect to the calling and

holding of Parliaments, to be the ſame with that of *England*.

THIS Prince, after the People *ſubmitted* to *him*, held a Parliament at *Dublin* (*b*), and, no doubt, the Practice of frequent Parliaments continued, tho' many of the *Rolls* thereof are long ſince loſt, which will be ſufficiently proved by ſeveral Inſtances mentioned hereafter, taken from ſome of the moſt ancient Records yet extant in this Kingdom.

KING *John* came to the Crown after the Death of his Father *Henry* II. and *Richard* I. his brother. He at firſt governed in a moſt arbitrary Manner; but the People ſoon made *him* ſenſible of *his* Error. This *King*, as a noble Writer (*c*) tells us, blundered and drew out his Army; but it was a *Britiſh one*. The King ſubmitted, and *Magna Charta* was ſigned.

IT was again ſigned by *his* Son and Succeſſor, *Henry* III. in whoſe Reign, all the Laws and Cuſtoms acknowledged in *England*, were made of Force here.

IN

(*b*) Rot. Parl. 2 Ric. III. Cap. 8.
(*c*) Lord *Bolingbroke*.

In the Reign of *Edward* I. who was one of the beſt Princes that ever governed *Great-Britain*, the Parliament was diſſolved to prevent its ſitting beyond the uſual Time.

The firſt Account we have then of Parliaments being held here, was in the Reign of *Edward* II. when that infamous *Brehon* Law was aboliſhed; for a continual War being carried on between the *Engliſh* tranſplanted hither, and the *Iriſh*, for almoſt a Century and a half; that therefore, it is not to be wondered at, that in Times of ſuch Confuſion, no *Memorials* ſhould remain of Parliaments being held frequently.

From the Reign of *Edward* III. to *Edward* IV. Parliaments in this Kingdom (as appears by Records ſtill remaining) ſeem to have met as frequently as thoſe in *England*, and uſed not to ſit above 10 or 20 Days. The Crown being then poſſeſſed of large Revenues of its own, ſufficient to ſupport its Dignity, amounting to

1061 *l.*

1061 *l.* a Day, (*d*) ariſing from its Demeſne Lands, and Quit Rents, beſides Fines and other caſual Profits, had little or no Occaſion to apply to Parliament: There were no ſtanding Armies; no Fleets to provide for.

IT the 40*th* of *Edward* III. a Parliament was held at *Kilkenny* (*e*).

AND in the 44*th* of the ſame King's Reign, another Parliament was alſo held at *Kilkenny* (*f*).

AND in the 46*th* of the ſame Reign, a Parliament was held at *Caſhell* (*g*).

IN the 48*th* of *Edward* III. two Parliaments were held, the one met on *Saturday* after the Feaſt of the *Holy Trinity*, and the other on the Octaves of St. *Hillary* (*h*).

AND

(*d*) *Ordericus Vitalis*, Fol. 523.
(*e*) Rot. Clauſ. Canc. de Anno 1° Ric. II.
(*f*) Rot. Pat. 46° Ed. III.
(*g*) Idem.
(*h*) Rot. Pat. 48° Edw. III.

And in the 50*th* and 51*ſt* Years of the ſame Reigns, two other Parliaments were alſo held here (*i*).

In the ſhort Reign of *Ric* II. four Parliaments were held here, one in the Firſt Year held at *Triſtledermot**, and the other at *Dublin* in the Fifth Year of his Reign, and that they were *but of ſhort Continuance*, appears by a Writ iſſued in his Reign for the holding of Parliaments, which directs, that the Acts thereof ſhould be certified to him in *England*, with all poſſible Expedition (*k*).

And, for the Safety and Defence of *Leinſter*, Writs of Summons were iſſued to the Prelates, Peers and Commons of that Province to meet as *Naas* on *Monday* next, after the Feaſt of St. *David*.

In the 12th *Rich.* II. a third Parliament was held at *Clonmell* (*l*)

And

(*i*) Rot. Clauſ. de Anno. 4 Ric. II. and 51° Edw. III.

* Anciently called ſo, but now *Caſtledermot*.

(*k*) Rot. Clauſ. Canc. de Anno. 1° Ric. II. & Rot. 5° Ric. II. 1*a* par.

(*l*) Rot. 12° Ric. II.

And in the 13th of the ſame Reign, another Parliament was held at *Kilkenny* and adjourned to *Triſtledermot* (*m*).

By a Statute made in *England* in the IVth Year of the Reign of *Edward* III. Parliaments were be held *once* in every Year, or *oftener*, which ſhewed manifeſtly that it was frequent *new Parliaments*, and not that frequent Seſſions were intended by that Law; for in thoſe Days, and for a conſiderable Time before and ſince, the conſtant Practice was, as ſoon as *they* had finiſhed their Buſineſs, that the Parliament was diſſolved; or as it is ſometimes expreſſed died a natural Death, and ſo a Period was put to its Exiſtence.

By *Poyning*'s Law, all the Statutes then ſubſiſting in *England*, were made of Force here.

King *Hen.* VIII. in his Letter (*n*) from *Windſor*, dated the 5th of *November* in the 32d Year of his Reign, writes, "Touching our "Parliament to be holden there, for as much "as

(*m*) Rot. 12° Ric. II.

(*n*) Rot. de Annis 32° & 33° Hen. VIII.

" as it is thought moſt convenient to us and " our *Counſaile*, that the ſame ſhall be kept in " the *Lent* Seaſon, being a Time moſt *propice* " and meet, therefore, for ſundry Reſpects, we " have at this preſent ſent unto you our Licence " under our *Great Seal* for the ſummoning of " the ſame, and begin in *Craſtino Purificationis* " next coming, &c."

KING *Hen.* VIII. alſo directed the Chief Governor not to continue the Parliament longer than a Year.

QUEEN *Elizabeth* in her Commiſſions for holding Parliaments, limited their Continuance to twelve Months, or a ſhorter Time if poſſible.

AND King *James* I. in 1615, refuſed to ſend over ſeveral Bills tranſmitted to *him*, becauſe the Parliament had ſat for about two Years, which was longer than uſual.

THAT Parliaments were held annually until the Reign of *Charles* I. appears from *Scobel's* Collection of *Acts* the 16th *Cha.* I. Chap. 1. which recites, " That by the Laws and Statutes " of this Realm, the Parliament ought to be

" holden at leaſt once every Year, for the re-
" dreſs of Grievances, but the Appointment
" of the Time and Place for holding thereof, hath
" always belonged, as it ought, to his Majeſty
" and his Royal Progenitors; and it is by Expe-
" rience found, that the not holding of Parlia-
" ments accordingly, hath produced ſundry and
" great Miſchiefs and Inconveniencies to the
" King and Common Wealth."

To reſtore frequent New Parliaments, was one of the principal Ends of the glorious Revolution; which was a *New Magna Charta*, an *Original Contract* between the King and People; the famous *Declaration* of *Rights*, ſays, that for the *Redreſs* of *Grivances*, for *amending*, *ſtrengthening* and *preſerving* the Law, Parliaments ought to be held frequently. And the Act made in the *Convention Parliament*, declares and enacts, " That
" all and ſingular the Rights and Liberties aſſert-
" ed and claimed in the ſaid Declaration, are the
" indubitable Rights and Liberties of the People,
" and ſo ſhall be eſteemed, allowed, adjudged,
" and taken to be; and all the Particulars
" thereof ſhall be firmly and ſtrictly holden and
" obſerved, as they are expreſſed in the ſaid
" Declaration."

" Declaration." The Rights claimed and aſſerted, are, that Parliaments ought to be held frequently.

THE Whigs in thoſe Days inſiſted, there could be no real Settlement until the Manner and Time of calling Parliaments, and their ſitting when called, were fully determined; and this in order to prevent the Practice of keeping *one*, and the *ſame Parliament ſo long on Foot, till the Majority was corrupted by Offices, Gifts, and Penſions*; *they* likewiſe inſiſted, that the Aſſurances given at the Revolution, had led them to expect, that the *ancient, legal Court of Annual choſen Parliaments* would have been immediately reſtored, and ſurely *they* had good Reaſon to expect this, not only from King *William*'s *Declaration*, but particularly as he had received the Crown by the Gift of the People. The Deſign of the Revolution could not be anſwered, unleſs the Freedom of Elections, and frequent new Parliaments had been Provided for; Defects in other Parts of the Conſtitution can never be fatal, if theſe are preſerved entire; but Defects in theſe, will ſoon deſtroy the beſt Conſtitution, tho' every other Part of it ſhould be preſerved.

At the Revolution, ſome Court *Sycophants* attempted to explain away the Meaning of the Act of the 4th of *Edward* III. and the *Declaration of Rights*, by conſtruing *frequent Parliaments* to mean no more than *frequent Seſſions*; by which the Conſtitution, inſtead of being *mended*, *ſtrengthened*, and *improved*, by the Revolution, would have been dangerouſly wounded and impaired by it; but effectually to eradicate theſe ſophiſtical Notions, the famous Lord *Sommers*, and the reſt of the *Patriots* of thoſe Times, inſiſted upon the Triennial Act, as a Barrier and Defence of the Rights and Liberties of the Subjects.

In the Preamble to this Act, two Things are aſſerted, "That by the ancient Laws and Sta-"tutes of the Kingdom, frequent Parliaments "ought to be held; and that frequent Parlia-"ments tend much to the happy Union, and "good Agreement between the King and his "People."

The firſt Propoſition is inconteſtibly true; and the latter, I think, will not be denied; for frequent and new Parliaments create a Confi-

dence

dence between the King and his People, a very neceſſary Step towards a Union and good Agreement.

This glorious Act, obtained with much Difficulty by ſome of the greateſt, as well as the beſt Men then in *Great Britain*, continued in Force twenty-two Years, and was afterwards Repealed in the Reign of *George* I. by means of a *Popiſh* Jacobite Faction, who had kindled up a Rebellion in that Kingdom, and which was afterwards made a Pretext for abrogating that moſt excellent Law.

Machiavel, in his Political Diſcourſes, lays down this Poſition; *That no Government can long enjoy Liberty, unleſs it be frequently brought back to its firſt Principles*, for it is the Nature of all Governments to degenerate.

There is a remarkable Inſtance of this among the *Romans*; *They* had been very liberal in beſtowing the Rights of Citizens on Strangers; ſo that the Power of their Elections began to fall into ſuch Hands as the Conſtitution had not intended to truſt with them. *Quintus Fabius* ſaw the growing Evil, and being *Cenſor*, he took an Opportunity; of diſtributing all theſe new Elec-

tors

tors into four Tribes; by which he put it out of their Power to turn the *Elections* as *they* had done whilſt their Numbers were divided among all the Tribes; freed his Country from this Danger, and reſtored the Conſtitution according to the true Spirit and Meaning of it, and obtained by univerſal Suffrage the Title of *Maximus*.

ALL *Countries* and *States*, in Proportion to the Extent of their Freedom, have made certain Proviſion for the frequent Meetings of their *Dyets* or *Parliaments*.

THE *Athenian* Senate, which conſiſted of Five Hundred, was choſen Annually. The Senate of *Venice*, which is very numerous, is choſen Annually. The *Deputies* that compoſe the *States General*, are revokable at Pleaſure, and go back to the Provinces on important Occaſions, to conſult their Principals. The People of *Spain*, made moſt careful Proviſion for the frequent Meeting of their *Cortes*, or *States*. The *French* Nation have alſo eſtabliſhed frequent Meetings of their Parliaments, or States, and even in that deſpotic Government, when there was any endeavour to ſuppreſs or put a Stop to *them*, it has always cauſed *Commotions*, *Tumults*, and *Rebellions*.

BUT

But if there were no Authority nor Inſtance, either *antient* or *modern*, for frequent New Parliaments in other Kingdoms, or States, the Experience of many Hundreds of Years hath ſhewn, that by preſerving the Conſtitution inviolate, or by drawing it back to the Principles on which it was founded, whenever it has been made to ſwerve from *them*, we ſhall ſecure to ourſelves and to the lateſt Poſterity, the Poſſeſſion of that Li- which our Aceſtors had ſo long enjoyed.

And here I cannot omit to take Notice of one Argument made uſe of among many others, by a Gentleman (*o*) of Eminence in the Law; who, before the writing of this Addreſs, publiſhed an excellent Pamphlet in Vindication of Septennial Parliaments, in which he ſhews the good Effects ſuch a Law would have in this Kingdom, particularly by reforming many of the poor deluded *Popiſh* Natives, and by becoming a Means of bringing them over to our eſtabliſhed Religion; for, ſays he, "Every Gentleman then would find "it his Intereſt to be aſſiduous in enlarging the "Number of his Proteſtant Tenants, in order

"to

(*o*) *Alexander M'Auley*, Eſq;

" to be of more Service to himſelf and Friends;
" Hence the *Popiſh* Tenants would be laid un-
" der the Neceſſity of conforming; for few of
" them would loſe, or even run the Hazard of
" loſing, their Farms for the Sake of Religion;
" few of them would chuſe to be ſet adrift with
" their Families, without knowing where to go,
" or any Proſpect of getting a Farm or Habita-
" tion elſewhere." That this Obſervation is well founded, is undoubtedly true; for ſince the Year 1761, when Application was made to limit the Duration of Parliaments in this Kingdom, from an Apprehenſion that a Bill would then, or at ſome future Day, be obtained for frequent new Parliaments, a far greater Number of *Roman Catholicks* have conformed, and become *Proteſtants*, than within the ſame Period of Time, ſince the Commencement of the *Popery* Laws.

This, ſays the ſame Author, " may be looked
" on as a feigned extorted Conformity, yet after
" their frequenting the Service of our Church for
" ſome Time, might become ſincere in many of
" them: At all Events, *they* would loſe much
" of their Bigotry and Virulence againſt our Re-
" ligion, and Landlords would, for their own

" Sakes

" Sakes, take Care to have the Children of theſe " Conformiſts, educated *Proteſtants:* Hence " would ariſe a large Fund for recruiting the Ar- " mies and Fleets of *Great-Britain*, and leſſen the " internal as well as external Enemies in this his " Majeſty's Kingdom."

SURELY, then, if there were no other Inducement or Conſideration to influence all Parts of the Legiſlature to concur in ſo uſeful and neceſſary a Law, eſpecially at a Time when it is well known, that Numbers of *Roman Catholicks* have come into *Great-Britain* and *Ireland* of late; this alone ought to be ſufficient: But excluſive of this Conſideration, *frequent new Parliaments* are beſt-ſuited to the Nature of our Conſtitution: It removes all Jealouſies which the People retain of their Members being corrupted, which will be ſuſpected when *they* continue for any Length of Time; for it is well known, that thoſe who accept of *Places* or *Penſions*, have not the ſame adequate Intereſt as when they were choſen, nor the ſame Opinion, nor the ſame Freedom.

Honores mutant mores.

And here I cannot avoid taking Notice of the wonderful Deeds performed by a ſingle Act of *Cromwell*'s, *in excluding all Members of Parliament from any Place or Penſion*; by which *Means*, even under the Diſadvantage of a moſt wicked Uſurpation, he was able, in the Midſt of domeſtick Diſcontents, beſet on all Sides with foreign Aſſaults and Invaſions, to maintain the publick Welfare from the Danger of inward Convulſions at home, and violent Concuſſions from abroad, by which Means he ſecured the Peace, and widely extended the Reputation and Honour of *Great Britain*.

If Corruption ſhould ever creep into the Fountain of Juſtice, the Legiſlature itſelf; if thoſe Springs, from whence the Health and Vigour of the Conſtitution flow, ſhould ever be poiſoned, can the People hope for Redreſs of Grievances? It is a difficult Thing for a Man to ſerve two Maſters, and to diſtinguiſh, when Conteſts ariſe, which ought to prevail, his Gratitude to his *King*, or his Duty to his *Country*. I do not doubt but that ſome Gentlemen in theſe Circumſtances would act according to the beſt of their Judgments, but at the ſame Time it muſt be confeſſed, that their Judgments might be guided

guided by their own Intereſt, and they pay their Court at the publick Expence.

We ſeldom ſee or read of a corrupt Houſe of Commons acting vigorouſly for the Intereſt of the King or People; ſome will ſervilely comply with the Court, to keep their *Places*; others will oppoſe it as unreaſonably to get them; and thoſe Gentlemen, whoſe Deſigns are for their Country's Intereſt, will grow weary of the beſt Form of Government in the World, thinking by miſtake the Fault is in the Conſtitution.

Frequent *new Parliaments* will effectually *deſtroy* that *Dependency* of the *third Eſtate*, which either of the other two might at any Time obtain over it, and is the Key-Stone, that keeps the Conſtitution together, for *the Ballance of the Parts*, as *a noble Writer* expreſſes it, *depends upon the mutual Independency of each other*. That Parliaments ought always to be Independent, is a general Principle, never yet controverted, and there is no one Thing about which Parliaments ought to be more watchful, than in maintaining this Principle, and ſecuring the good Effects of it.

AGAIN, is it reaſonable that any particular Set of Men, ſhould, for a Length of Time, engroſs ſo great a Truſt excluſive of all others; no doubt but Perſons of equal Birth, Fortune, Abilities and Merit, expect to have in their turn, a due Share of the publick Honors, and ſee not without *Diſcontent*, thoſe whom *they* have been accuſtomed to think their Inferiors, preſerve a Superiority over them for many Years.

IT is not agreeable to the Nature of a Repreſentative, to be continued for any Length of Time, becauſe it prevents thoſe that chuſe, or appoint them, from frequently calling them to Account for the Diſcharge of the Truſt committed to *them*, and of approving or diſapproving their Conduct, by electing, or not electing them a-new. *They* derive their legiſlative Capacity from the People, and by no Rule of Law or Reaſon can *they* extend to their own Advantage, the Authority delegated to them; becauſe that would be not only to aſſume a Power to alter the ancient Conſtitution, but to deſtroy the Fences erected for the Security of Freedom, and the fundamental Rights of their Conſtituents.

AND

And here I cannot but take Notice of an Obſervation of a moſt ingenious modern Writer, (*p*) who ſays, "That no People can give away the "Freedom of themſelves and their Poſterity; "that ſuch a *Donation* ought to be eſteemed of no "greater Validity, than the Gift of a Child, or "Madman; that the People can no more part "with their legal Liberties, than Kings can ali-"enate their Crowns."

If Gentlemen were afraid to truſt to the Peoples' Choice again, (which I cannot, will not even ſuppoſe of our *Patriot Houſe* of *Commons*, who have unanimouſly agreed to a Bill for limitting the Duration of Parliaments) it might look as if *they* were inclined to perpetuate themſelves, to become their own Electors, and ceaſe to be the Truſtees of the People; which brings to my Mind the Saying of a Nobleman (*q*) of great Wit and Talents, on the like Occaſion, and who was a zealous Oppoſer of the Repeal of the Triennial Act; That if that Parliament, meaning

(*p*) See *Moleſworth*'s Account of *Denmark*.

(*q*) Earl of *Peterborough*.

ing the Triennial, continued beyond the Time for which *they* were choſen, he knew not how to expreſs the Manner of their Exiſtence.

I WOULD now aſk, if frequent new Parliaments was one of the Advantages obtained at the Revolution for the People of *Great Britain*; why his Majeſty's *Proteſtant* Subjects of this Kingdom, are not as well entitled to all the Benefits of this *new Magna Charta?* Did *they* not vindicate, and aſſert the Principles of the Revolution as ſtrenuouſly, loyally, and faithfully as thoſe of *Great Britain?* Was not the Settlement of the Crown of *England* upon the Prince and Princeſs of *Orange*, *conditional?* Was not this Reſtitution and Declaration of Rights, the *Condition* of that Settlement? Was not our Acknowlegement of the Prince and Princeſs of *Orange* as King and Queen of *Ireland*, *conſequential* of, and *dependant* upon, that Settlement?—and does not therefore the *Condition* of the Former neceſſarily become the *Condition* of the Latter?—and is not the Preſervation of theſe Rights alike the Tenure by which both Crowns are held? Did King *William* continue the Parliament for Life in *Ireland?*

or

or did Queen *Anne?* By no Means. Was there ever an Inſtance of it, from the beginning of Time till the Reign of *George* I? Was it endured then from any other Motive than a Conſideration of the Newneſs of the Eſtabliſhment, and the moſt ardent and even paſſionate Attachment of the *Proteſtants* of this Country to the preſent auſpicious Family on the Throne? And tho' the Reign of *George* II. gives us another Inſtance of a Parliament continued for the Life of the reigning King, yet are we not to hope that the Loyalty and Attachment which rendered ſuch an Infringement of our Laws, Conſtitution, and fundamental Rights, tolerable for a Time, will at length be rewarded by a Reſtitution of them all? But we do not demand a total Reſtitution of them.—We do not require Annual Parliaments.—We aſk only for Septennial.—That is, that our Parliaments may not be continued to a longer Term than ſeven Years the longeſt period to which it was found poſſible to *extend* them in *England*, even by that arbitrary and corrupt Miniſter Sir *Robert Walpole*, aſſiſted by the recent Suppreſſion of a Rebellion which

was

was a Pretext for doing from that Fear, which could not be juſtified in Principle. When we conſider this, and reflect for a Moment that in the meaneſt Colonies belonging to the Crown of *Great Britain*, their popular or repreſentative Aſſemblies are Triennial at the fartheſt, and in many of them Annual, we cannot but hope and be perſuaded, that the Honour of reſtoring us thus far to our Rights was reſerved to crown the Glories of the preſent Reign, and to render the Name of our third *George*, as eminent for the Reſtitution of Liberty, as that of his renowned Predeceſſor *William* III.

No State was ever ſo framed, as not to make new Laws neceſſary to remedy Evils; for this Reaſon, every State is inveſted with a Power of altering or repealing old Laws and Cuſtoms, and of ſubſtituting new ones in their Stead, where thoſe exiſting are found deficient.

FORTESCUE, who wrote his Treatiſe *de Laudibus Legum Angliæ*, in the Reign of *Henry* VI. on purpoſe to inform the then Prince of *Wales* of the

the Nature of the *Engliſh* Conſtitution tells *him*, that the *King* is obliged by his *Coronation Oath*, *when the Laws are deficient, to ſet them Right in Parliament, as often as required.* How much more to obſerve and to reſtore our fundamental Laws and moſt eſſential Rights?

All our Hiſtories tell us, that long Parliaments are plainly deſtructive of the Subject's juſt Right, and many Ways inconſiſtent with the Good of the Nation, that they have always occaſioned Uneaſineſs and Diſcontent: If ſo, ſurely the Works of thoſe Men who oppoſe frequent new Parliaments, denote them ſufficiently *bad*. *Unhappy* Men! who ſeek their private Good, in Oppoſition to the publick Safety. *Vain* and *inconſiderate* Men! who imagine *they* ſhall be judged in the Right, and the whole Body of the People in the Wrong.

I ſhall now conſider ſome of the principal Arguments made Uſe of by the Advocates for long Parliaments.

It is ſaid, that frequent new Parliaments will occaſion great Expence at Elections, that

they will produce Riots, Animoſities, Idleneſs and Drunkenneſs.

THIS Argument proves too much, for then Parliaments ought to be perpetual. As to the Article of Expences, I know of none fairly incident to a Gentleman's propoſing himſelf the Subject of this Great Truſt: If to ſucceed herein, all Virtue and Religion in the People be to fall a Sacrifice to his Views, and that they were to encreaſe in proportion to the frequency of new Parliaments, this might be an unanſwerable Objection to *them*. I am ſorry to admit, that the Expence in Elections has in ſome Counties been great; but I have the Satisfaction to make this Circumſtance an undeniable Proof of the Neceſſity and Expediency of frequent new Parliaments: Surely it is evident, that the Member's Seat, like every other Poſſeſſion, muſt fall in the Price, with the Shortneſs of the Tenure: *His* Report to his Conſtituents, who are in a few Years to re-elect, or reject him, muſt riſe in the ſame Proportion. His Importance in that precarious Seat, muſt be leſs the Object of *tempting* Favours: Gentlemen will then *bribe* their

Conſtituents

Conſtituents with nothing but their own intrinſic *Worth*, and then, indeed, that glorious Branch of our Legiſlature will be compoſed of the fitteſt, moſt perfect, and natural Members. Of Gentlemen of *Property*, *Abilities*, *Knowledge* and *Integrity*, ſuperior to the ſordid Views of Self-intereſt; not the indigent Man who may be induced to make a Traffic of that Sacred Truſt, and who muſt be fortified with more than ordinary Courage and Philoſophy to act otherwiſe; to ſuch a Parliament *unengaged, truly choſen by the People*, what Country could give Limits when aided by *Great-Britain?* There is nothing within the Compaſs of human Wiſhes, that we might not aſſure ourſelves of obtaining from the Wiſdom and Virtue of ſuch a diſintereſted Aſſembly, animated by the moſt auſpicious Prince that ever ſwayed the *Engliſh* Sceptre.

I am not a little ſurprized to find ſo much Streſs laid on ſuch weak Foundations as *Expence at Elections:* Are they not voluntary? I am perſuaded there would be no Conteſt, no Heat, no Animoſities, nor any Expence, if Elections were frequent, if they were left entirely to Gen-

men, who have the natural Intereſt in a County or Borough where they live: Becauſe, if a Candidate found himſelf defeated by fair Means, and merely by the ſuperior Intereſt of *his* Antagoniſt, it would not raiſe his Indignation; he would wait with Patience for a new Opportunity, and in the mean Time, endeavour to recommend himſelf to his Country, by Acts of Benevolence and Hoſpitality: But ſuppoſing frequent new Parliaments were productive of ſome Expence in a few Counties, are ſuch temporary Inconveniencies, and the trifling Conſequences of them, to be ſet in Ballance againſt the Danger of weakening the Barrier of our Liberties? Every Form of Government hath Advantages, and Diſadvantages peculiar to itſelf: Muſt then all thoſe Forms inſtituted to preſerve the Checks and Controuls of the ſeveral Parts of the Conſtitution in one another, and which are abſolutely neceſſary to preſerve the Liberties of the whole, be abandoned, and a free Conſtitution deſtroyed for the Sake of an Expence which may happen to a few People. Is that a Reaſon the whole Community ſhould be deprived of their Rights? Every Gentleman is a Judge of his own Circumſtances,

cumſtances, whether he will, or can, be at the Neceſſary Expence of an Election: But I will take upon me to ſay, if the People were left to themſelves, *they* would, without much Conteſt or Expence, chuſe the Gentleman who would not only take the beſt Care of his Fellow Subjects, but of *his King*, and the true Intereſt of *his Country*, which would, in a little Time, moſt effectually eradicate this ſo much magnified Evil.

As to Riots, they are not owing to frequent new Elections, but to one and the ſame Parliament continuing for a Length of Time, and to the infamous Practice of *bribing* the Electors; for it is well known, when Parliaments were held annually, or for a ſhort Time, there were no Riots, and domeſtick Tranquility had been better ſecured under ſhort, than under long Parliaments.

In the great City of *London*, where many of their *Officers* are choſen annually, tho' the Number of Voters on thoſe Occaſions are as numerous as in ſome Counties, and much greater

than

than in many Boroughs, their Elections are carried on without Riots or Expence, and after it is over, the contending Parties go Home, and live in the ſame Friendſhip as they did before.

It has been objected, That the People have no Right to remonſtrate to their Repreſentatives.

The Tendency of this ſlaviſh Principle is induſtriouſly propagated by flagitious Men. He that labours to blind the People, and keep them from inſtructing their Repreſentatives in all Points eſſential to their Intereſt, may juſtly be ſuſpected of bad Intentions; but he who makes it his Buſineſs to open the Underſtanding of Mankind in the great and important Points of Government cuts up *Faction* by the Roots; for it is eſſential to Wiſdom and Knowledge to ſupport an equal and good Government.

Lord *Coke* (*r*) ſays, "The Repreſentatives "of the People often refuſed to agree to Subſi-

"dies

(*r*) 4 Inſt. 14 and 34.

" dies aſked by the King, until they had a Con-
" ference with thoſe of their ſeveral Counties
" and Boroughs, who had intruſted *them.*"

In the 9*th* of *Edw.* III. when a Motion was made for a Subſidy to be granted of a *new Kind*, the Commons anſwered, *They would have Conference with thoſe of their ſeveral Counties and Places who had put their Truſt in them, before they treated of any ſuch Matter.* And in the 13*th* of the ſame Reign, the *King* declared to the Parliament, that he ſtood bound to furniſh his Allies with 30,000 *l.* and therefore wanted an Aid of his Commons to pay the ſame; but the Commons made *Anſwer, That they knew and tendered the King's Eſtate, and were ready to aid him in this new Device, only they durſt not agree without further Conference with their Counties.*

This ſhews plainly, that the Repreſentatives of the People in thoſe Days, did not think themſelves *independent* of their *Conſtituents.* If this was the Caſe when annual new Parliaments were held, ſurely no one will deny, that the Exerciſe of it grows more and more expedient in Proportion

portion to the Length of Parliaments, ſince it is impoſſible for the People to foreſee at the Time of Election, what Affairs may come under their Deliberation for ſeveral Years to come; and therefore muſt reſerve their Thoughts to themſelves, until ſome Point of Moment is actually brought on the Carpet, or diſcovers itſelf to the Publick, and furniſhes them with Matter of *Inſtruction*.

In the Reign of *Charles* II. there were a Set of *Miſcreants* who traduced the Right of petitioning or inſtructing, as ſeditious, and declared an Abhorrence of it: But they received a ſevere Cenſure in Parliament, and have ſince been branded in Hiſtory with the infamous Name of *Abhorrers*.

Now this Right of Inſtruction, which ought to be more ſacred, becauſe more neceſſary in long Parliaments than in ſhort, has been exerciſed by almoſt all our Counties upon the Subject, and the Voice of the People has declared itſelf in Favour of this Law in the ſtrongeſt Manner,

and

and with the greateſt Fervour and Unanimity.

THE firſt Principles of Power, ſays a moſt ingenious Writer, * are in the People, and all Projects of Men in Power ought only to refer to *them*, and aim ſolely at their Good, and end in it; whoever will pretend to govern, without regarding them, will ſoon have Reaſon to repent it: *They* well know, that Government is appointed for their *Sakes*, and will therefore expect ſome Regard and ſome Advantage from the *Delegates*. The Government of *One*, for the Sake of *One*, is Tyranny; and and ſo is the Government of a *few*, for the Sake of *themſelves*: But Government executed for the Sake of *All*, is Liberty; and the Word Government is profaned and its Meaning abuſed, when it ſignifies any Thing elſe.

THERE were alſo lately in this Kingdom, another Sett of Men, of *ambitious*, *turbulent*, *reſtleſs Spirits*, with great Propenſity to *Faction*, who, in order to ſerve their own ſelfiſh Views and Intereſt, induſtriouſly ſpread about the Expediency of *long Parliaments* in this Kingdom;

 that

* *Bolingbroke.*

that the Buſineſs of Government could not be carried on ſo eaſily under *ſhort Ones:* Theſe were Inſects of the Earth, and like other Inſects, though ſprung from Dirt, and the vileſt of the animal Kind, *they* would nibble and gnaw, and poiſon; and if they were ſuffered to multiply and work on, *they* might have laid waſte the moſt fruitful Country. Is not the Buſineſs of Government in this Kingdom, the real Concern and Intereſt of the People? Are *they* not to take Care of their own Safety, as well as for the Honour and Dignity of the Crown, to provide for the *civil* and *military Eſtabliſhment*; if they do not, muſt not all *Trade* ceaſe, and the *Courts* of *Juſtice* be *ſhut*, the *Army diſbanded*, and we left without any Protection, or Defence againſt *external* and a Multitude of *internal Enemies?* Men, who could propagate ſuch deteſtable Notions *if living*, would deſerve to be anſwered not with Words, but with our utmoſt Abhorrence and Contempt.

In the Reign of *James* I. there was an extraordinary Monopoly attempted by ſome People,

People, whoſe Avarice and Ambition, were almoſt equal to their Aſſurance. In order to ingratiate themſelves with theKing, and to engroſs all Favours and Preferments to themſelves, and their Dependants, *they* undertook that the King's Buſineſs (as they called it) ſhould paſs in the Houſe of Commons as his Majeſty could wiſh; upon which Occaſion, the Great Sir *Francis Bacon* made this remarkable Speech, "That *he* had heard of *Undertakers* of ſeveral "Kinds of late; that there were not long "ago ſome *Undertakers* for the *North-Weſt* "Paſſage; ſome *Undertakers* for the Plan-"tations of *Derry* and *Coleraine*; and ſome for "the Project of *dreſſed* and *dyed Cloaths*; but "for the Parliament of *England*, which moves "in a certain Manner and Sphere, to be *under-*"*taken*; it paſſes, ſays he, my Reach to con-"ceive what it could be. Muſt we be all *dyed* "and *dreſſed* and no *pure White* among *us?* or "muſt there be a *new Paſſage* found for the "*King's Buſineſs*, by *a Point of the Compaſs that* "*we never failed by before?* or muſt there be "ſome *Forts* built in this Houſe, that may "*command* and *contain the reſt*. Mr. Speaker, ſays "he

" he, I know but of *two Forts* in this Houſe, which " the King ever hath, the *Fort of Affection*, and " the *Fort of Reaſon*; the one commands the " *Hearts*, the other commands the *Heads*. The " King has told you, that *he* doth not ſo much " reſpect *his preſent Supply*, as the Demonſtra- " tion he hath received, that the *People's Hearts* " are more knit to *him*, than before."

A PRINCE who governs by the Affections of *his People*, makes of all others the *ſafeſt* and *firmeſt* Government; and the more he takes in of the Paſſions, and Intereſt of *particular Men*, the more unſtable it grows, and we muſt conclude with Sir *William Temple*, " That the " Stability of any Frame of *Government* may be " judged of by the Rules of *Architecture*, which " teach us, that a *Pyramid*, is of all other Figures " the firmeſt and the leaſt Subject to be ſhaken " or overthrown by any Accident from the " Earth, or Air; and it grows ſtill ſo much " the firmer by how much *broader* the *Bot-* " *tom*, and *ſharper* the *Top*. The Ground upon " which all Government ſtands, ſays he, is " the *Conſent* of the *People*, or the greateſt or " ſtrongeſt of *them*; for *Power ariſing from* " *Strength*,

" *Strength, is always in thoſe that are governed,*
" *who are many*; *but Authority from Opinion,*
" *is in thoſe that Govern, who are but few.* Now
" that Government which takes in the Conſent
" of the greateſt Number of People, and con-
" ſequently their Deſires, and Reſolutions to
" ſupport it, may juſtly be ſaid to have the
" broadeſt *Bottom*, and make a Figure of the
" firmeſt Sort. On the contrary, a Govern-
" ment, which by alienating the Affection,
" loſeing the Opinions, and croſſing the In-
" tereſt of the People; may juſtly be ſaid to
" loſe Ground, to narrow its *Bottom*; and
" if it is done to *ſerve* the *Ambition*, *humour*
" the *Paſſions* and *ſatisfy* the *Appetites*, or *ad-*
" *vance* the *Power* and *Intereſt* of *one*, *two* or
" *more Men*, that come to ſhare in the Go-
" vernment, by theſe Means the *Top* may be
" juſtly ſaid to grow *broader* as the *Bottom*
" narrower by the other. Now by the ſame
" Degree that either of theſe happen, the Sta-
" bility of the Figure is by the ſame leſſened
" and impaired, ſo at certain Degrees to begin
" to grow ſubject to Accident of Wind, and
" Weather, and at certain others, it is ſure to

" fall

" fall to the Ground of itſelf by the leaſt Shake " that happens."

If this *Obſervation* of Sir *William Temple* be juſt, then ſurely it is more for the Intereſt of the *Prince* to *govern* by the *Affections* of *his People*, than by gratifying the *Ambition*, humouring the *Paſſions*, or advancing the *Power* and *Intereſt* of a *few Men.*

I have now gone through the Subject I intended to conſider; if it is clear, as I imagine it is, that the Objections to frequent new Parliaments are weak and ill founded; or ſuppoſing them to be in ſome Sort well founded, if the Danger on one Side outweigh vaſtly the ſuppoſed Inconveniences on the other; if the laws and inſtitutions made for the Preſervation of the Conſtitution, ought to be maintained for the Sake of preſerving Liberty: How comes it to paſs, that ſo great a Difference ariſes between the Sentiments of Mankind about frequent Seſſions of Parliament, and frequent Parliaments? The only Manner of accounting for ſuch Inconſiſtency, ſays a noble Writer,* is this, " the Sight of the Mind differs " very

* *Bolingbroke.*

" very much from the Sight of the Body, and its " Operations are frequently the Reverſe of the " other. Objects at a Diſtance appear to the for- " mer in their true Magnitude, and diminiſh as " they are brought nearer. The Event that creates " much Aſtoniſhment, Indignation and Terror in " Proſpect, creates leſs and leſs, as it approaches, " and by the Time it happens, Men have familia- " rized themſelves with it." But ſuppoſe, (for I deſire it may be remembered, that we *reaſon all along Hypothetically*, and therefore expect that no *Parallels*, no *Innuendos* will be ſuppoſed againſt *any Man*, or *particular Set of Men now living*) that a Parliament ſhould think fit to give in one Seſſion, all the Money neceſſary for carrying on the Buſineſs of Government for Twenty-one Years; and then let thoſe Perſons who would be ſhocked at this Suppoſition, conſider, whether ſuch an Alteration of the Conſtitution might not grew familiar to *them*, and even gain their Approbation. Sure it might as reaſonably as the other. They would find the Eaſe in one Caſe, of little Attendance, as well as that of diſtant Elections in the other. The Argument of Convenience,

venience, Expediency, and publick Tranquility, would be as properly applied. But let not the *Lovers* of *Liberty*, the *Friends* of the *Conſtitution* reaſon in this Manner. Let them remember that frequent Elections of Parliament are an eſſential Part of the Conſtitution, and that the Work of the *Revolution* is imperfect, and our Security precarious, unleſs *they* be reſtored. Let them hold faſt their Integrity, and ſupport with Spirit and Preſerverance the Cauſe of their Country, and *they* will confirm the Good, reclaim the Bad, and make the Conſtitution triumph over Corruption.

P. S. SINCE the above was written, the Public has been alarmed with a Rumour, (God forbid that it ſhould be true) that the Septennial Bill is not to return from *England*. If this ſhould be the Caſe, it will perhaps be thought that it will become our P——t and our Gov——t, conſidering how they are connected with the *Engliſh* Adminiſtration, to take ſome vigorous Step to demonſtrate that Zeal and Sincerity in this truly publick Cauſe which will endear them to this Country, and reward them with the Gratitude and the Bleſſings of the People.

THE END.